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SELECTED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON MILITARY TRAINING IN NORTH VIETNAM

/Translation/

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FOREWORD

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[These articles are taken from the Quan Doi Nhan Dan (People's Army), a Vietnamese-language newspaper published in Hanoi.]

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1. Editorial on Basic Training

No 666, 1 December 1959

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Based on military policies and the strategic and tactical concepts of the Party, the tactical training program this year has made much progress. Nevertheless, because we have not yet conceived definitely the new characteristics in the army situation (such as the incompetence of basic cadres, the increase of recruits), certain shortcomings have arisen in many places, restricting the result of training.

The most obvious weakness lay in our inability to consolidate the individual combat training for new recruits and the tactical training for squads. For example, throughout the firing drill, many comrades concentrated on taking aim but devoted little time to rifle drill and thus could not handle correctly their weapons. Many combat lessons had to be conducted in groups because there was not sufficient time for individual training, and what was more disappointing was the difficulty in maintaining attention in such integrated exercises. In addition, a number of cadres have not understood adequately the relationship between training and study. If the above shortcomings cannot be overcome in time, the fighting capacity of the army will be affected.

As we know, the basic training for individuals and squads is the foundation of tactical training; this foundation must be solid before any structure can be built. At first glance the training of an individual is only a small job, but when our view is widened to embrace the whole army, the task becomes tremendous. If basic training is not imbibed, the application of tactics on all terrain and all battlefield situations will be less fruitful. In the particular case of new recruits, losses in fighting are sure to be considerable if basic techniques, basic formations, combat movements for individuals and squads are not assimilated. Basic training for individuals and for squads, therefore, is not only the important mission from now to the end of the year, but also the regular mission from now on.

To accomplish that mission we must take into consideration the following factors, in addition to giving adequate attention to the problem:

First, the improvement of the cadres at the base, in respect to both training methods and knowledge, must be regarded as a key mission. Only by raising the standard of the basic cadres can we help them to discharge satisfactorily their responsibility. This is a rule we must follow strictly. Insofar as the cadres at the squad level are concerned (especially the present squad leaders), the company commanders and platoon leaders must, besides the weekly program of improvement, make direct

contact with them to help them realistically, to exalt their new efforts, to propagate experiences, and to lead them forward. Each company commander should select one squad as an example to stimulate the spirit of competition in the company. The leap forward must be regulated by periodical revision to strengthen the weak squads.

Second, the principle of training must begin from the easy to the difficult, from the simple to the complex, from the base upward; speak little but do more; reexamine constantly the result; remedy immediately the mistakes where they are committed; and conduct close order training before tactical training.

The spirit with which we are commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Party and the 15th anniversary of the army drives us to advance forward. We must exploit the favorable conditions of this training year to harvest the glorious results of tactical training in general, and basic training in particular.

2. Military Training Plans for 1959

No 664, 26 November 1959
Pages 1 and 2

Major General Hoang Van Thai

Special Attention Must be Given to the Military Training Orders of the Ministry

As we know, in peace time, political indoctrination, military training, and general education are the central and constant missions of the armed forces. Therefore, the armed forces Party representative always concerns himself with these matters. After having conceived and evaluated the military situation in the first few months of this year, the armed forces Party representative has decided to entrust the General Staff and the general political committee with the mission of giving orders to accelerate military training from now to the end of the year.

What is the substance of such orders? In general, the issues underlined by these orders had been determined in the military training order of the General Staff for 1959 as well as in the order of the armed forces Party representative at the beginning of the year. After a training period, the General Staff and the general political committee pointed out the basic areas of progress of the movement and designated them as the lessons of leadership that the Party representatives at all levels must exploit to the fullest extent. At the same time, the General Staff and the general political committee illuminated certain training aspects, emphasized the necessity to overcome the present shortcomings so as to translate the results of military training into combat readiness, and to meet the requirements of building our present armed forces into full standing status.

Based on the analysis of the situation, the orders outline the concrete missions to be accomplished and stress the fact that progress in military training can only be achieved by the fulfillment of these missions. Embodied in the orders are the study of the general situation and the plans tailored realistically to include the program of training, and methods of training and leadership, which not only solve the present important problems, but also aim at long-range direction and other matters related to the construction of the armed forces.

In short, exhaustive studies, strict supervision, and timely and enthusiastic execution of orders are the issues to which the Party Representatives at all levels must give special attention.

Beware of Two Erratic Tendencies

In my opinion, an efficient command must rest on the uniformity of thinking among the Party representatives at all levels, and among all cadres and soldiers. If we have not reached such uniformity, if our subjective ideas have not been exposed to the realistic objective contingencies, two erratic tendencies will prevail: The first one leads us to see only the achievements and to overlook the shortcomings, to evaluate complacently the present situation and to reduce the sense of urgency, and finally, to over-simplicity and irresolution in execution. Then everything resumes its old pace, the standard of instruction is not raised, the result of training is not certain, military discipline is not reinforced, the regular army's standing operating procedures are not followed, leadership is not improved, etc. Naturally, this is the outcome of complacency and subjectivity.

The second tendency makes us lose sight of all basic advantages in the past and overstress the mistakes in training to the extent of negating progress in other missions and the enthusiastic support of the masses. This is also the manifestation of subjective ideas. The second tendency will complicate the leadership, divert leaders from the heart of problems, give rise to popular suspicion of the leadership of the Party representatives at all levels, prepare the ground for negativism to grow, restrict positive ideas, retard the advance of military training and limit the mass movement. In other words, both tendencies form a poor basis for positive measures to accelerate the training mission. To execute correctly the superior orders is to fight against such erratic tendencies. For that reason, in studying the orders, the Party representatives and the cadres at all levels must consider realities as criterion, and must have a realistic basis for adequate self-criticism. I want to emphasize self-criticism on a realistic basis because lately the accumulation of work has prevented many leaders and many heads of different organizations from controlling the situation under their commands. If self-examination and self-criticism are relaxed, if the mass movement is not magnified, subjectivity and sentimentality will come to the fore. Education and stimulating ideas among new recruits must also be uplifted.

Organizing and Improving the Cadres Are Decisive Factors

In an effective command, the formulation of concepts is as important as the establishment of plans and measures of adjustment, or, in other words, the organization for executing the orders. If we want to push forward the mass movement and to keep abreast of it, we must bear in mind that the organization and improvement of the cadres are decisive

tasks next to political indoctrination and inculcation of ideas. In this connection, each individual and each unit, from squad to regiment to division, must have its own realistic plans and measures. In devising such plans and such measures, we should not concentrate solely on present important problems but also on long-range projects; we should avoid working for the sake of work. At the regiment and division level, plans must have a uniform scope, a uniform timetable, definite steps, determined reporting procedures and pre-established requests for instructions. Plans must eliminate decentralization, divergence in working schedules, and elongation and slowness in execution. When plans have been formulated and measures have been set forth, the execution must be exact, energetic and resolute. We must object vehemently to the freedom tendency and to the lack of seriousness in the fulfillment of superior orders and unit plans. At the same time, we must endeavor positively to eliminate automatic work that is devoid of inventiveness.

We must resolutely follow the popular policy, widen the democratic discussion procedures and suggest the measures likely to surmount difficulties in the accomplishment of our mission. On the other hand, we must constantly exalt the sense of responsibility in cadres, ensure the uniformity of ideas and the reinforcement of discipline. The execution of orders is a process of unifying thinking and also a continuous reorganization and improvement of cadres at all levels.

Leadership Must be More Inspiring and More Expressive

In the leadership viewpoint, the execution of ministerial orders requires the recognition of another principle which states that Party Representatives lead and unit commanders delegate the mission and assume the responsibility. Party representatives must grasp the important tasks such as analyzing different situations, appraising the determination of an outfit, and instructing all party members of the measures to overcome shortcomings. In accomplishing a mission, Party representatives must follow the unfolding of different phases and correct in time the aberrations. When applying the decision of Party representatives, the military and political leaders must assign missions to subordinate organizations rationally, devise measures for each phase of execution, reexamine the progress constantly, and report any contingency in time to help the Party representatives assert a vigorous leadership. The commanders at high levels and in central organizations must make direct contact with the lower echelons; their presence must be felt down to the companies, their eyes must be fixed on the enlisted man in training, their ears must be ready to listen, their brain must work constantly to foresee the problems presented by the units, and their conversation must be ultimately directed to the soldiers. If these premises are to be followed, working methods must be improved, the meeting time must be reduced, and conferences must be well prepared in advance.

In my opinion, the solution to the present "busy" situation of all units does not consist of reducing this task or that mission; the important thing is to correct working methods, change the working organization, and raise the competence of the cadres at all levels (especially at the company level). In brief, we must apply without challenge the principle that Party representatives lead, and unit commanders delegate the mission and assume the responsibility.

Unify opinions and viewpoints on the basis of reexamination, determine plans and measures to correct mistakes realistically, execute the superior orders with determination, make continuous contact with lower levels, and revise the progress made and report on time. These are definite steps to be carried out in the accomplishment of the mission assigned by the Ministry. In the process, ideas (which are principal) must go hand in hand with organization. The superior orders can be carried out only when the above steps have been followed. To execute correctly and with resolution the military training orders of the Ministry is to ensure the fulfillment of the military training plan for this year.

3. Artillery Training Conference

No 662, 21 November 1959

Pages 1 and 4

On 11 November the Artillery Training Conference was held with the purpose of evaluating the achievements and the advantages in the last training phase, and finding out the shortcomings and weaknesses in the movement so as to bring the training mission into another new phase.

The conference unanimously agreed that under the military policies of the Party, the tactical as well as the technical training in the entire artillery arm have projected a favorable move and made much important progress.

In training, party leadership has stood out in bold relief. The Party representatives at all levels and all districts have realistically penetrated deeper than before into the training mission; they have been concerned not only with the training direction and expenditures, but also with a number of concrete, important matters such as the classification of forces, methods of realization, techniques, etc. Party officials at different levels have also considered training an important, constant and lasting mission, and have coordinated other missions to support it.

The popular policies, too, have been heightened in training, and the enthusiasm and inventiveness of the masses have been mustered and developed to enable the cadres and the command at all levels to solve many difficulties in this year's training program.

As far as training itself is concerned, cadres and enlisted men have been instructed in strategic and tactical concepts and in the policies of the armed forces Party representative. Therefore, the study and publication of instruction materials, the review of past war experiences, and the movement toward practicing and improving techniques have produced good results.

These, the conference emphasized, reflect enormous progress and basic achievement.

Together with accomplishments, the conference analyzed the training situation and pointed out such shortcomings as the poor coordination between training and combat readiness; the wrong view on the importance of cadres training, which led to a slow organization and ineffective plans for that purpose, and to the hindering of military training in general; the lack of attention and the simplification of technical training for the sake of tactical training, which resulted in reducing time

reserved for technical training; and the tendency of a number of units to set high expenditures without a realistic basis, which had as a consequence the increase of labor incompatible with a streamlined organization necessary to improve training methods and to raise the fighting capacity.

The conference severely criticized the solicitation for grades, self-aggrandizement of power, irrelevant examinations, the loosening of certain training rules applied during war-time, and the rush for highly praised results.

The conference also pointed out the erratic tendencies -- which were widespread and could become dangerous -- in neglecting the regular army training procedures. The principle of calculation in planning has been far from effective; the realization of a plan and the administrative process have not been judicious; plans themselves have not been flexible. Furthermore, the sense of discipline has not been elevated, and cadres and enlisted men have not displayed the sense of urgency and resolution in executing orders.

Having analyzed the causes leading to shortcomings and successes, the conference set forth directions for new efforts, appealed to all cadres and enlisted men in the entire artillery arm to exploit the advantages, correct weaknesses, bolster the resolution to advance the competitive training movement to a new phase, and to adjust to reality in commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Party and the 15th anniversary of the Army.

4. Reserve Officers Training in Thai-Binh

No 669, 8 December 1959

Pages 1 and 2

Recently, the Thai-binh Provincial guard organized the first training phase, pursuant to Party military policies, for the reserve cadres. More than 490 reserve officers of all ranks in the whole province have received instructions.

Major General Hoang Van Thai, Assistant Chief of the General Staff, visited the class and addressed the students. He praised the magnificent achievements of the Thai-binh militia throughout the previous year, in training as well as in construction, and the consolidation and development of the mass movement. Then he analyzed the present situation and mission.

After having pointed out the mission of the Party, the people and the army in building up the armed forces and consolidating national defense, he emphasized particularly the mission of the reserve officers at all levels. "Your mission," he said, "is heavy and multifarious. In the first place, you must participate wholeheartedly in the construction of the local reserve force; make the reserve force strong, not only in politics, but also in combat, worthy of being a powerful instrumentality of the Party, capable of accomplishing its mission of advancing socialism in rural areas, maintaining order and security, and ensuring a happy life for the peasants. Second, you must participate in all local missions with the sense of responsibility inherent in an officer formed by the Party, the people and the army during the eight years of fighting. The reserve officers must present themselves as the efficient cadres of the Party in all military, political and cultural missions; they are the leaders in the promotion of socialism in rural areas."

Comrade general reminded the officers that they should constantly study politics, propagate socialism, struggle to eliminate such erratic conceptions as bureaucracy, complacency, self-interest, and primacy of family; devote all available time to military training in order to grasp the military policies of the Party, and to ameliorate tactical and technical knowledge; and at the same time, endeavor to improve working methods and leadership procedures. To the cadres in charge of the local military tasks he made known the necessity to sustain the absolute leadership of the Party, of the Party representatives, and of the district committees in the consolidation of the reserve force.

Finally, comrade assistant chief of the General Staff repeated to all officers the duty to maintain and develop resolutely the venerable tradition of the Army, to follow closely and loyally the revolutionary mission of the Party, to strive conscientiously to overcome all difficulties to accomplish the task assigned by the Party.

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